R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 011 159 EC 000 042

PROGRESS REPORT GUIDE FOR OPPORTUNITY CLASS TEACHERS.
BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MD.

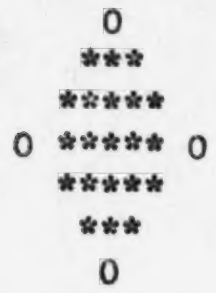
PUB DATE 64

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$1.04 26P.

DESCRIPTORS- *MENTALLY HANDICAPPED, *STUDENT EVALUATION, *HOME VISITS, *GRADING, *STUDENT DEVELOPMENT, ACHIEVEMENT RATING, PARENT CONFERENCES, OPPORTUNITY CLASSES, REPORT CARDS, BALTIMORE

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE IS PRESENTED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS WHO WISH TO EVALUATE THE PROGRESS OF THEIR MENTALLY RETARDED PUPILS. PUPIL FOLDERS, ANECDOTAL RECORDS, DAILY PERFORMANCE, AND CUMULATIVE RECORDS ARE DESCRIBED. THE SPECIAL GRADING SYSTEM IS EXPLAINED, AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR GRADING ARE PROVIDED. THE PROGRESS REPORT SECTION LISTS QUALITIES TO BE EVALUATED IN THE AREAS OF PERSONAL AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. CHECKLISTS FOR LANGUAGE ARTS, ARITHMETIC, HEALTH AND SAFETY, SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES, MUSIC, HANDCRAFTS, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION ARE INCLUDED. TECHNIQUES FOR CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS ARE DESCRIBED. THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF HOME VISITS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS ARE ALSO DISCUSSED. (JZ)

ED011159



PROGRESS REPORT GUIDE

FOR OPPORTUNITY CLASS TEACHERS

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
THREE EAST TWENTY-FIFTH STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21218

1964

ELEMENTARY SPECIAL CURRICULUM

PROGRESS REPORT GUIDE FOR OPPORTUNITY CLASS TEACHERS

Table of Contents

Foreword

Table of Contents

THE PROGRESS REPORT

Pages

I. Sources Used in Evaluating Pupils 1
II. Structure of Progress Report 2
III. Reporting Techniques 3

A. Grading Technique 3
B. Comment Technique 3

1. Purpose of Comments 3
2. Frequency of Comments 4
3. Composition Techniques 4

IV. Content of Progress Report 5

A. Personal Development 5

1. Purpose and Techniques of Area 5
2. Check List for Content: "HOW IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL, WORK, AND STUDY HABITS?" 5

B. Educational Development 7

1. Purpose and Techniques of Area 7
2. Check List for Content: "HOW IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS?" 7
3. Check List for Content: "HOW IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING IN ARITHMETIC?" 9
4. Check List for Content: "HOW IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING IN THE AREAS OF HEALTH, SAFETY, SCIENCE, AND THE SOCIAL STUDIES?" 10
5. Check List for Content: "HOW IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING IN THE SPECIAL AREAS OF HANDCRAFT, MUSIC, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION 12
6. Attendance 13
7. Comments of Parents 15

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

CONFERENCES WITH PARENTS

		Page
I.	Individual Conferences with Parents	16
II.	Group Conferences	16
III.	Home Visits	18

NOTES TO PARENTS

I.	Purpose of Notes	20
II.	Structure of Notes	20
III.	Procedure for Notes	20

THE PROGRESS REPORT

I. Sources Used in Evaluating Pupils

The teacher should gather data from as many sources as possible before evaluating pupils on the progress report. The more varied the sources from which the teacher gathers information, the more accurate and objective the evaluation. The growth of the mentally retarded is slow, and progress is assured in small segments. Rarely can the teacher look for dramatic growth in these children because their rate of growth is generally slow.

A. Pupil Folders of Sample Work

The teacher should keep a sample folder for each pupil in her class. This folder should contain reading, arithmetic, handwriting and spelling, science and social studies practice materials. These materials should be put into the folders at regularly spaced intervals during the school year. Thought should be given to the types of materials put into the folder so that the collection will offer a true picture for grading the child's developing ability.

B. Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal records of pupil reaction to school situations are very valuable to the teacher. Analysis of these records may be kept:

1. Daily
2. Semi-weekly
3. Weekly

The number of anecdotes will depend upon the severity of the problem the child presents. Objective descriptions of behavior clarify thinking and offer more concrete evidence for pupil evaluation.

C. Daily Performance in Classroom and School

As the teacher works with her pupils each day, observations are constantly being made of the pupils' social and educational development. It may be helpful to occasionally jot down pertinent data. When the time comes for filling out the progress report, these notes become very valuable in checking development.

D. Cumulative Records

These records are useful for providing an overview of the child's total school development.

E. The Opportunity Class List

This list gives the following information:

1. C.A.
2. Current M.A.
3. I.Q.

4. Reading Level (for current and previous years)
5. Arithmetic Level (for current and previous years)
6. Number of months in the Opportunity Class program

F. Record of Attendance

A careful and accurate accounting of attendance and lateness is kept in the roll book.

G. Individual Conference with Parent or Child

After a conference with a parent or a child, the teacher should make notes to which she may refer for guidance before filling out the progress report.

H. Conference with the School Nurse, Home Visitor, School Social Worker, Counselors, and Others

These conferences are invaluable to the teacher in broadening understanding of problems the child may be meeting in life adjustment. If this information is available, the teacher can more adequately understand the child's values and aspirations.

II. Structure of Progress Report

A. Similarity to Regular Grade Report Card

The Progress Report for the Opportunity Classes has been designed to look like the regular grade report cards. This has been done purposely so that the child will have the feeling of being part of the regular elementary program and will not be set apart by an entirely different report card. These similarities are:

1. Size
2. Color of ink
3. General structure (folded into three parts)
4. Dates of distribution to coincide with those of the other elementary grades

B. Basic Differences

Just as great care has been taken to recognize similarities in children, it is also necessary to provide for the differences in the basic learning processes of the mentally retarded child. The report card includes these differences:

1. Code
2. Arrangement of content
3. Inclusion of comments in each area

III. Reporting Techniques

A. Grading Technique

The mentally retarded child is graded in two main areas: his personal development and his educational development.

A number rating is given for each habit and each skill. The code assigns a number to the child's level of operation.

Code 1 Does Well

If the child is performing at the best of his ability in terms of his mental endowment, it can be said that he does well.

Code 2 Makes Satisfactory Progress

If the child is performing at a satisfactory rate in terms of his mental endowment, neither exceptionally well nor exceptionally slowly, it can be said that he makes satisfactory progress.

Code 3 Makes Progress Slowly

If the child makes very little growth in his educational and social development in terms of his innate ability, it can be said that he makes progress slowly.

Code 4 Makes Unsatisfactory Progress

If the child remains at the same level and shows no growth, or if he can be said to be retrogressing, he makes unsatisfactory progress.

The teacher should be exceedingly careful in marking at this level because most mentally retarded children do make progress, however microscopically. This negative mark will not contribute to the positive climate so necessary for growth and should be used sparingly.

B. Comment Technique

1. Purpose of Comments

The progress report provides a space under each area for teacher comments. The comment should consist of a short, personal message to the parent, describing some aspect of the development in the area being marked. A short, clearly-expressed comment should extend the parent's understanding beyond the code mark. These comments could stress the following:

a. The areas in which the child has progressed
b. The areas in which improvement is needed
c. Suggestions for bringing about an improvement

Comments should be expressed so that the cooperation and confidence of the parents are gained. This will improve the home-school relationships. Negative comments breed hostility. When discussing the areas which need improvement, it is always best to express them positively. Never would the teacher use comments as a disciplinary factor.

2. Frequency of Comments

Progress for some children may necessitate a teacher's comment each time the report card is issued. Other children need a comment only once a semester. The decision rests with the teacher. It is suggested that the comments be dated.

3. Composition Techniques

a. Be concrete and specific. Avoid generalizations. Indicate any progress the child has made before stating needs for improvement. Instead of, "Jack is a hard worker," say, "Jack is improving in his reading and can now recognize new words. However, he does have some difficulty in understanding what he reads. Could you encourage him to practice reading from his home reader and perhaps also to join a library?"

b. Avoid comparisons. Instead of, "George does more work than anyone in the room," say, "George always finishes his work and shows interest in doing extra assignments."

c. Make statements clear and easy to understand. Avoid educational terminology such as: number processes, attacks words independently, experiential background, etc.

d. Emphasize the relationship between the child's progress and his ability. Instead of, "Jane can do better," say, "Jane completes her written work, but she is in such a hurry that she does not take the time to form her letters carefully or make her papers neat."

e. Avoid statements that children should not read about themselves. Instead of, "Jack is a nervous child," or, "Jack takes things that are not his," say, "Jack has several problems or habits which I would like to discuss with you. Will you please arrange to have a conference with me at your earliest convenience?"

f. Proofread all written comments for spelling, grammar, legibility, and neatness of handwriting. The teacher serves as a model to pupils and parents in this respect and cannot afford to make errors.

IV. Content of Progress Report

A. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Purpose and Techniques of Area

a. Purpose

The social, work, and study habits comprise the areas of greatest possible gain for mentally retarded children. Where they might show minimum results academically, these children can show outstanding growth in the development of worthwhile habits. The teacher has an enormous responsibility in clearly defining the direction for growth and in carefully checking the pupils on the progress report as they move toward maximum development.

b. Techniques

A check list is provided as a guide in arriving at the number rating for the development of social, work, and study habits. Use of this list will provide a systematic approach in checking and grading.

2. Check List for Content: "HOW IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL, WORK, AND STUDY HABITS?"

a. Obeys rules

(1) Conduct in the classroom.
(2) Conduct in the hall
(3) Conduct in the lavatory
(4) Conduct in the cafeteria
(5) Conduct in the playground
(6) Conduct during fire drill and air raid practice

b. Pays attention when others are speaking

(1) To classmates
(2) To other teachers as well as his own
(3) To patrol safety
(4) To school personnel

c. Accepts worthwhile suggestions

(1) Helpful comments from teachers
(2) Helpful comments from peers
(3) Helpful comments from other school personnel

d. Accepts responsibilities

(1) In the classroom

(a) Completes assignments
(b) Has own pencil ready for work
(c) Brings notes from home when required
(d) Performs classroom duties

(2) In other areas

(a) In cafeteria
(b) In auditorium
(c) In other parts of school building
(d) On the playground
(e) With school safety council

e. Respects rights and property of others

(1) Returns borrowed materials in good order
(2) Gets consent to use materials
(3) Takes care of clothes, books, and materials
(4) Takes care of properties on the way to school, from school, and surrounding school

f. Gets along well with others

(1) Works well with a group
(2) Plays well with others
(3) Is friendly and outgoing
(4) Is a good sport
(5) Shares with others

g. Takes effective part in class and school activities

(1) Contributes as a group member
(2) Shows leadership
(3) Is interested and participates in activities
(4) Identified with class and school

h. Follows directions

(1) For group activities

(a) Oral
(b) Written

(2) For individual activities

(a) Oral
(b) Written

i. Makes good use of time and materials

(1) Starts promptly
(2) Completes the assignment
(3) Is thrifty in use of materials
(4) Finds worthwhile activity after completing assigned work

j. Does neat and careful work

(1) Keeps paper clean
(2) Spaces work adequately and neatly
(3) Checks work for mistakes and omissions
(4) Does his best writing at all times

k. Tries to keep neat and clean

(1) Keeps hands, face, teeth, nails, and hair clean
(2) Keeps clothing neat
(3) Takes care of school clothes

B. EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Purpose and Techniques of Area

a. Purpose

It is essential that each mentally retarded child achieve his maximum potential in the development of language arts, arithmetic, health, safety, science, and social studies skills.

b. Techniques

A check list is provided as a guide in determining the number rating for each area of the educational development. Use of these check lists will provide a systematic approach in determining growth.

2. Check List for Content: "HOW IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS?"

Facility in the language arts should be developed to the maximum of the child's ability. This would include listening, speaking, writing and reading.

a. Shows interest in reading materials

(1) Shows desire to read all types of reading materials
(2) Independently seeks reading materials
(3) Brings books and magazines to school
(4) Belongs to public library
(5) Is enthusiastic about school library

b. Understands what he reads

(1) Answers questions orally
(2) Discusses the material read
(3) Works satisfactorily with practice materials which check comprehension

c. Works out new words

(1) Through contextual clues
(2) Through use of phonics
(3) Through use of dictionary

d. Applies reading to daily living

(1) Is developing a protective reading vocabulary
(2) Understands school and classroom signs
(3) Can locate information in newspapers
(4) Knows how to interpret store advertisements
(5) Is developing the ability to cope with written forms

e. Listens thoughtfully

(1) Thinks about what others are saying
(2) Understands directions before acting
(3) Watches approved TV
(4) Enjoys hearing literature

f. Speaks clearly and distinctly

(1) Puts correct endings on words
(2) Uses judgment to determine:

(a) Volume
(b) Pitch
(c) Rate
(d) Enunciation

g. Expresses ideas in speaking

(1) Expresses complete thought
(2) Is able to state essential facts
(3) Understands what he is talking about
(4) Can ask an intelligent question
(5) Can deliver a simple message

h. Uses correct English

(1) Is developing the ability to correct grammatical errors
(2) Is developing an understanding of correct vocabulary for varied social situations, i.e. invitations, greetings, telephone procedures

i. Spells required words

(1) Word list given in the Guide
(2) Social study words
(3) Arithmetic words

j. Spells correctly in written work

(1) Writes sentences independently
(2) Uses spelling words correctly

k. Forms letters correctly

(1) Is aware of the correct and complete formation of letters
(2) Dots i's and j's
(3) Loops l, b, e, f, h, k
(4) Crosses t's
(5) Aligns letters

3. Check List for Content: 'HOW IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING IN ARITHMETIC?'

The development of the ability to work with numbers is one of the most important areas in the education of the mentally retarded. Number activities should be both meaningful and functional. The scope should include counting, computing, measuring, weighing, estimating, buying, selling, and budgeting.

a. Understands and uses numbers

(1) Has concepts of numbers
(2) Understands relative value of numbers
(3) Is able to understand and use the basic processes
(4) Is developing skill in computing numbers

b. Solves number problems

(1) Can determine the correct process to be used in solving oral and written problems
(2) Understands the arithmetical processes in social studies activities
(3) Is learning to solve problems arising in the cafeteria and other school activities
(4) Is learning to solve problems involved in community living

(a) Transportation
(b) Errands

c. Understands and uses measurements

(1) Can recognize and use terms necessary to measure

(a) Time
(b) Money
(c) Weight
(d) Length
(e) Liquids
(f) Quantity (dozen, etc.)
(g) Temperature

(2) Is aware of comparison involving number concept such as:

(a) Few - many
(b) More - less
(c) Tall - short
(d) Big - little
(e) Heavy - light

d. Applies number skills to daily living

(1) Uses knowledge of measurement in life situations
(2) Knows value of coins
(3) Can make change
(4) Is developing an understanding of saving money to plan for necessities of daily living
(5) Is developing an understanding of wise buying based on value

4. Check List for Content: 'HOW IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING IN THE AREAS OF HEALTH, SAFETY, SCIENCE, AND THE SOCIAL STUDIES?'

The mentally retarded child needs a program specifically planned to help him develop an understanding of his personal responsibilities so that he may function effectively in a world which he finds complex and demanding. He must be taught the basic health and safety concepts which will protect him. He must actively participate in science and social study activities which are planned to increase his understanding of his environment.

a. Understands and follows good health rules

(1) Washes hands after going to lavatory
(2) Is developing a basic understanding of the importance of a proper diet
(3) Sits, stands, and walks well
(4) Is developing good personal grooming habits
(5) Understands the importance of taking care of teeth and hair
(6) Understands the function of doctors, dentists, nurses, and clinics

b. Understands and follows safety rules

(1) Obeys safety rules

(a) On the stairs
(b) On the playground
(c) In the halls
(d) In the gymnasium
(e) In the lavatory
(f) At home

(2) Practices safety

(a) With tools
(b) With scissors
(c) With sharp objects

c. Understands basic scientific facts

(1) Is developing an understanding of basic scientific concepts

(a) Earth
(b) Sky
(c) Weather
(d) Animals
(e) Plants
(f) Machines
(g) Magnets
(h) Electricity

(2) Can perform simple classroom experiments

d. Understands how people live and work together

(1) Is developing a general knowledge of the school, home, community, city, state, and United States through participation in social study unit activities
(2) Participates in social study unit activities
(3) Is developing an appreciation of the interdependence of people
(4) Uses study materials

(a) Maps
(b) Globes
(c) Dictionary
(d) Reference books
(e) Magazines
(f) Newspapers
(g) Charts
(h) Pictures

e. Understands the responsibilities of a good citizen

(1) Practices good citizenship in:

(a) Classroom
(b) School
(c) Neighborhood
(d) Community

(2) Is developing a basic understanding of the rights and privileges of citizenship
(3) Is developing a basic understanding of city, state, and United States government

f. Applies this knowledge to life situations

(1) Is growing in ability to interpret responsibilities
(2) Is growing in ability to contribute to community living
(3) Is growing in ability to become a responsible citizen
(4) Is growing in the understanding of a basic knowledge of the world in which he lives

5. Check List for Content: "HOW IS YOUR CHILD PROGRESSING IN THE SPECIAL AREAS OF HANDCRAFT, MUSIC, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION?"

The development of skill in these areas is very important. There are no intellectual barriers impeding participation, and even the most seriously retarded child can grow in physical education, handcraft, and music skills. The therapeutic value gained from participation is immense, contributing immeasurably to self esteem.

a. Takes part in handcraft activities

(1) Works with materials

(a) Uses a variety of materials

Crayons
Paints
Chalk and charcoal
Paper for drawing and painting
Paper for cutting and pasting
Modeling materials
Building materials

(b) Selects and uses materials wisely

Selects materials best suited to the purpose
Conserves materials
Is careful with and takes care of tools

(2) Expresses his creative ability

(a) Draws and paints to music
(b) Manipulates materials well
(c) Models recognizable objects
(d) Makes creations based upon actual experiences
(e) Makes creations based upon vicarious experiences
(f) Makes creations based upon imaginary experiences
(g) Has confidence in producing work of his own
(h) Takes time to produce his best work
(i) Experiments with new methods and techniques

b. Takes part in music activities

(1) Takes part in singing songs by learning the words and melody
(2) Responds rhythmically to music through bodily movement
(3) Knows the name of rhythm instruments and how to play them
(4) Listens to recorded music for appreciation
(5) Recognizes mood in music such as a lullaby, a march, and various dance forms
(6) Shows evidence of interest in music by other activities such as dramatizing, creating dance steps, writing words for a familiar tune, learning to play a song flute

c. Takes part in physical education activities

(1) Takes part in indoor and outdoor activities under teacher guidance

(a) Is developing coordination
(b) Is participating in rhythmic activities
(c) Is learning how to take care of and use physical education equipment
(d) Is developing physical fitness

(2) Participates in independent activities indoors and outdoors

6. Attendance

Most educators agree there is high correlation between good attendance and punctuality and a stimulating, interesting school program. To have such a program, a teacher must plan ways of interesting the child and influencing him to want to come to school.

An attractive, orderly room will do much toward making the child feel comfortable. Centers of interest to which the child may freely go before school may stimulate his feeling of belonging and encourage him to come to school daily. The teacher's attitude is also of great help when she understands and accepts each child wholeheartedly.

If there are latenesses and absences, it is important for the teacher to determine the underlying causes. Every effort should be made to get the cooperation of the parent to have the child in school on time. Once the cause has been determined, the teacher can take steps to remedy the situation and secure the needed cooperation of the parent.

a. Procedures for Recording and Reporting Absences and Latenesses on the Report Card

(1) The teacher keeps in the roll book an accurate accounting of the attendance and punctuality of each child.
(2) The exact period for which the report card is designed are entered in the designated blocks on the report card.
(3) A note is required from home for each absence. It is suggested that the teacher file each note she receives. These notes are valuable for reference.

b. Suggested Procedure for Obtaining Home Cooperation for Problem Cases

(1) When a child is absent for three consecutive days from school, and there is not information available about his absence, the teacher reports it to the Home Visotor by filling out an attendance card for the absentee. Careful attention is given to her report by the teacher.
(2) A telephone call may be made to the home as a friendly interested gesture, to inquire about the absence of a child. This may motivate the parent to cooperate.
(3) Some teachers find it worthwhile to make a visit to the home of a child who is often absent or late. This helps to promote good parent-teacher relationship. A home visit should be planned so that the parent will be informed of the visit ahead of time. The teacher should greet the parent pleasantly and indicate concern for the child's absence or lateness. This should be a friendly interview.

c. Devices for Encouraging a Child to Come to School On Time Every Day

(1) Assign interesting worthwhile pre-school duties to children.
(2) Have an attractive attendance chart.
(3) Keep an attendance graph.
(4) Teach "time" in arithmetic lessons.
(5) Reward the class occasionally for 100% attendance (an extra play period, a story, etc.).
(6) Have quiet games available for the children (checkers, lotto, puzzles, dominoes).
(7) Let the children use the xylophone and autoharp.
(8) Have a talk with the child to let him know you are concerned about his attendance or lateness. Show him what happens in the roll book when he is absent or late.

7. Comments of Parents

a. Ways to stimulate parents' comments

(1) Thought-provoking statements under teacher comments should stimulate parents to write a comment.
(2) Including a question in the comments could call for an answer by the parents in the comment section.
(3) If the parent writes a comment, the teacher follow it up immediately to show the parents that their remarks are considered important.

b. Teacher follow-up on parent comments

(1) Cooperative parents

The alert teacher will follow up by becoming better acquainted with the parents. She will try not to leave any questions unanswered in the minds of the parents. In this way a team approach may be promoted to solve the pupil's problems.

(2) Indifferent parents

(a) A comment in the form of a question may stimulate a parent to write a remark under the parent comment section.
(b) Some teachers clip a note to the report card extending a comment and asking for a direct answer or a conference.
(c) Some teachers like to make a telephone call to parents to establish a parental interest.

(3) Parents who disagree

(a) This problem is best solved by a conference.
(b) The teacher should use every precaution against becoming involved in any argument.

CONFERENCES WITH PARENTS

I. Individual Conferences with Parents

A. Time of Interview

These interviews are scheduled at the convenience of the parents and the teacher. They can be held before school, at lunch time, or after school. Most teachers prefer scheduling conferences after school.

B. Plan for the Interview

The teacher carefully plans the purpose of the interview. She always points out the good things rather than the bad things. The positive aspects of the child should be brought out. The misbehavior should be discussed and analyzed. At this time, the parent should be helped to see how he can work with his child at home. This implies the ways in which the parent can help the child to make good personal and social adjustments. It does not mean homework and instructional duties. If there is a program of homework operating in the classroom, the teacher can explain the purpose and ask for parental cooperation. It is well to have samples of the child's work to demonstrate points made during the interview.

C. Technique for Conducting an Interview

The teacher should arrange comfortable seating for the interview. She may sit with the parents around a table or sit side by side in chairs. She should make every effort to make the parent feel at ease by:

a. Avoiding lecturing or arguing about situations
b. Avoiding asking questions, making suggestions, or giving information when the parent is emotionally upset
c. Letting the parent do his share of the talking and listening for valuable information
d. Closing on a constructive and forward-going note

D. Length of Conference

By planning the purpose of the interview, the teacher is able to guide the discussion. Although the conference should be unhurried, she should avoid drawn-out, purposeless conversation. Two one-half hour conferences can often be more productive than one one hour conference if there is a purposeful plan underlying the interview.

II. Group Conferences

A. Parent-Teacher Association (P.T.A.)Meetings

Parents of mentally retarded children are always invited to the school's Parent-Teacher Association meetings. They are sometimes reluctant to attend because they feel a kind of stigma is attached to them because of their children's handicap. The alert teacher is aware of this and takes special steps to encourage and promote attendance. Sometimes this is most effectively done as a class unit project. She would certainly encourage attendance as a part of conferences with parents

B. Parent Education Classes

In some schools, parent education classes have been organized. These discussion classes permit parents to gain the insights and understandings needed to guide their children into happy adulthood. They also include visits to classrooms in an effort to help parents understand methods and objectives.

In addition to these general classes held during the school day, there are night groups devoted entirely to the parents of mentally retarded children. Information about these classes can be obtained from the Division of Adult Education.

C. Class Parent Clubs

Many teachers have successfully encouraged a Parents' Club made up of the parents of the children in their classes. The parents seem to derive great emotional benefit from discussing common problems. The club meetings also offer an excellent opportunity for the discussion of the aims and curriculum of the class. The 'togetherness' of this group, which is partially social in the sharing of refreshments, promotes a fine feeling of sharing and of mutual interest. There are usually agout four meetings each year planned and organized according to club proceedings, rules, and regulations. The club meetings after school in the classroom.

D. Invitation to Culminating Activities

Parents should be invited to programs which the children prepare as they culminate unit activities. This device permits parents to understand the aims of the program; they also enjoy seeing their children take an active part in the activities.

III. Home Visits

A. Purpose

A teacher can never fully understand the motivations and values of her children if she does not have some insight into their home environment. Through home visits, she is able to observe economic and social influences. She should be able to get some idea of the role of the child in his family group. The home visit also serves to demonstrate to the parent the teacher's personal interest in each child in her class.

B. Plan for the Home Visit

1. Clearance for visit

Before the teacher makes a home visit, she should first discuss and clear her plan with the principal. Sometimes it is not wise to go to a home, and the principal can give advice on the merits of a visit.

2. Announced Visits

The teacher may write an informal note to the parents telling them that she plans to visit them to talk with them about their child's school adjustment. This gives the parents a chance to prepare for her visit if the time is agreeable or to make another date if it is not agreeable. If the parent has a telephone, the teacher may prefer to call to make the appointment.

3. Unannounced Visits

There may be times when the teacher finds it necessary to visit the home without announcing her visit. Her purpose should be clearly in mind, and she should avoid inconveniencing the parent.

C. Time of Visits

The teacher frequently arranges the visit so that she walks home with the child. In this way, the child serves as a host for the visit. He is made to feel he is an important part of the conference. He will not, however, remain in the room while the teacher and his parent talk about him.

Some teachers like to visit the home in the evening as this usually offers an opportunity for her to observe the whole family group.

When taking over a new class, it is often very advantageous for the teacher to visit the home of each child before she takes over the class. These visits would necessarily be done during the vacation period.

D. Technique for Home Visits

The home visit is informal in nature, and the teacher conducts herself as a guest in the home. She observes all social amenities. She keeps the purpose of the visit clearly in mind and carefully avoids over-staying.

NOTES TO PARENTS

I. Purpose of Notes

A. To establish positive and friendly relationships where negative resistance has been evidenced

B. To secure parental cooperation:

1. For school projects
2. For classroom projects
3. With behavior problems
4. With educational problems

C. To satisfy parental request

A check on child's progress for a short term (as opposed to progress shown by progress report)

D. To answer specific questions posed by parents

II. Structure of Notes

A. Form

1. Brief
2. Gracious
3. Positive

B. Content

1. Pointed to the specific purpose of the note
2. Short explanations rather than lengthy and confusing terminology
3. Vocabulary chosen to correspond to the level of parent's understanding

III. Procedure for Notes

A. The Note

1. Clear with principal

a. To obtain clearance for content and purpose
b. To obtain assistance through editing

2. Appearance of Note

a. Full sheet of plain paper
b. Adheres to letter-writing rules
c. Written in ink
d. Careful clear handwriting
e. Envelope sealed

B. Delivery of Note

1. Through mail

a. Provides most efficient means
b. Shows more authority

2. Delivery by Pupil

a. Child prepared as to purpose and importance of note
b. Pupil checked delivery in follow-up